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ABSTRACT

Motivating students to study foreign languages is a unique problem within American culture. Experience suggests that Americans are psychologically inhibited from identifying with other people because of sensitiveness to their immigrant past. Some foreign language educators have concluded that, because of this past, teaching of foreign languages will always be difficult, if not impossible, in most American schools. Others feel that this factor merely makes foreign language instruction more difficult, but not impossible. According to the latter view, the key to motivating American students lies in getting them intrinsically motivated. The problem is that foreign language acquisition requires the learning of a great deal of material which, in itself, is not intrinsically motivating. As a result, many teachers attempt to force-feed the material into students. This tends to drive them out of foreign language study and to reduce enrollment levels to the point where the program is financially questionnable. Thus, the key to success in the American foreign language classroom lies in making the necessary drill material palatable without having the classroom deteriorate into "fun and games." The article discusses the above-mentioned problem and suggests techniques for motivating students in the context of American education. (Author)

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MOTIVATING STUDENTS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

By

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INTRODUCTION

The question of how to motivate students to study foreign languages in American schools has been with us for a long time. In this century we have given many different reasons for being in the curriculum. We have told students that the study of language is good mental discipline, that it is in the national interest, that it is good for big business, that it will promote international understanding, that it will make better tourists, that it is needed for college, and more recently, that it is related to something called "career education." Despite all this, enrollments continue to drop in many schools and colleges across the nation. And once again we hear charges from many quarters that foreign languages are basically irrelevant. An anthropologist named Paul Turner has even suggested that the situation is hopeless. And he cited research indicating that to learn a language properly one must identify positively with the people who speak it. For this reason, in his opinion, we are unlikely to prosper as a discipline because: "Americans...are psychologically inhibited from identifying with other people because of our sensativeness to our own immigrant past. To cover up our feelings of insecurity, we hold negative stereotyped images of foreigners that prevent us from identifying with them."[1] In Turner's view this means that there is no hope of improving student motivation by making

changes within the profession itself. Instead he believes that our efforts must be directed outside the profession to changing attitudes of the general public to produce a better acceptance of second language learning. Although I agree with his basic analysis[2] I do not share Turner's pessimism regarding the inability of the profession to make a degree of progress by working directly with students in the classroom. In fact, I believe that the young people of today and tomorrow will be increasingly receptive to what foreign languages have to offer if only we who are the professionals in the field can make certain basic modifications in the nature of foreign language instruction. It is my purpose in this paper to suggest what I consider to be the major changes needed. Let me begin by attempting to explain the term "motivation" as I am using it here.

INTRINSIC VERSUS EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

For many centuries leading educators and psychologists have supported the idea that intrinsic student interest in the subject matter in question is essential to serious learning and to significant achievement. If we apply this concept to Turner's views mentioned above about the inability of Americans to become language learners, we have a basis for suggesting that he has misinterpreted his data. Turner based his theory of American second-language inferiority on a study by Lambert which indicated that "Anglo" students of French who wished to identify positively with the Canadian French culture and tradition proved to be superior learners of French when compared to those who looked upon the French language as being merely instrumental to external aims such as earning money or otherwise succeeding in bilingual Canadian society.[3] I would like to suggest that the favorable ethnic bias was not the key factor which influenced the results. A favorable attitude toward the target culture is one secondary factor which can influence a student to become intrinsically motivated, but it is the intrinsic desire to learn the language which is basic. We know, in fact, that other factors can cause students to become intrinsically committed to

the study of a second language. In my opinion it is a mistake, therefore, to assume that one factor (favorable ethnic bias) is the sole determiner of optimum student performance.

The pedagogical question is, "How does the teacher-in the typical classroom situation-get students intrinsically motivated?" One can find hundreds of quotations to the effect that it should be done. Jerome Bruner, for example has stated that, "Ideally, interest in the material to be learned is the best stimulus to learning rather than such external goals as grades for later competitive advantage."[4] In my opinion, it is this art, this ability on the part of the teacher to get students "interested in the material" which has confounded a half century of empirical research efforts in the area of instructional methodology, especially those of the control-experimental type. It has been documented that most of the large-scale studies have come out NSD - "No Significant Difference."[5] And for the few studies which favor the experimental strategy, there is a matching study somewhere which favors the older way of doing things. The end result is that the studies have told us virtually nothing. The same is true of research in foreign language education. The Pennsylvania Study, for example, shows that student achievement does not correlate with teacher proficiency in listening, speaking, reading or writing in the language of instruction. Nor does it relate to her/his knowledge of methodology, linguistics or culture, as measured by standardized, supposedly valid and reliable instruments. In fact, one of the researchers noted almost plaintively, that in some cases the highest student achievement was found in classes where teachers came out "substandard" on tests of language proficiency and knowledge of culture, methods, and linguistics.[6]

To my way of thinking the answer to this apparent puzzle is quite simple and obvious: The key to good teaching involves getting students themselves to want to

learn. Hence pedagogical expertise and language proficiency, beyond a certain minimal level, is basically irrelevant. It can even be counterproductive as in the case of native-speaking teachers I have known who showed nothing but contempt for American students and who, as a result had students responded by dropping the course or by producing contemptible results. In large-scale studies the ineffective native-speaker apparently neutralize statistically those highly effective native-speaking teachers who are sensitive to cultural differences and who learn to adapt successfully to the American school.

To define intrinsic motivation pedagogically on a very practical level one might say that it involves those techniques which induce the learner to want to do what he has to do in order to accomplish the task at hand. A classic example of this is found in Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer at the point in the story where the young hero convinces some neighborhood boys that his assigned task of painting the fence is, indeed, a pleasurable activity. The result is that the boys end up doing Tom's work for him, and enjoying it. The act of painting in this instance meets the test of intrinsic motivation which is "what a person does when external pressures to engage in the behavior are absent." However, as the authors of that definition have noted, "The problem is that not every worthwhile activity is intrincially interesting. And many important and potentially interesting activities,...may seem like drudgery rather than fun until one has acquired a few rudimentary skills. There is no question, therefore, that extrinsic motivation is often needed to get people to do things they wouldn't do without it."[7] Therein lies a problem, particularly for teachers of foreign language. Extrinsic motivational devices such as report card grades, meeting of requirements, words of praise, pats on the head, and gold stars can function effectively as traditional or introductory devices. That is, extrinsic motives can get the students into our area of learning (which they might otherwise have missed) or they can serve to get students to a point of mastery where intrinsic satisfaction in the activity itself can begin to function. That, in fact, is the only basis upon which such

extrinsic inducements can be educationally justified. The problem is that we have tended to extend extrinsic inducements to the point where they become educationally destructive. For, as Greene and Lepper have noted, "a person's intrinsic interest in an activity" is decreased "by inducing him to engage in that activity as an explicit means to some extrinsic goal."[8] The implications of this are that, while we may well use as initial inducements such things as college preparation needs, entrace and degree requirements, the grading system, and the promise of possible career applications, we had better use them sparingly and in a general way. For the misuse of extrinsic inducements is associated with high dropout rates, poor memory retention, and mediocre achievement. If foreign languages are to have any significant place in the curriculum of the future, we must, therefore, learn to use extrinsic motives only for the purpose of getting students exposed to language learning in the first place and to get them to engage in the essential but tedious kinds of language practice that are prerequisite to intrinsic satisfaction. This means that a satisfying emotional "payoff" must be built in as a regular part of the instructional sequence. However, the enjoyment must come as an integral part of the craftmanship which is inherent in the process of acquiring a second language. Enjoyment can also be used in such a way that it functions as an extrinsic inducement. However, when so used it presents the same dangers as do other extrinsic motives. Students can become so addicted to fun as an external reward that they will stop functioning effectively unless it is supplied. Hence I am highly suspicious of "fun and games" activities which bear no functional relationship to the on-going course of study. When taken to extremes such an approach can lose the respect and support of students as effectively as the soul-deadening drudgery of the worst traditional classroom or the mindless, robot-like parroting of the misguided audio-lingual program. Thus, the paradox of motivation is that work and play, effort and satisfaction, achievement and joy are interrelated and mutually dependent in such complex ways as to have defied adequate description over the years.

With regard to the question of enjoyment there is a tradition in American foreign language education which can be summarized with the term "Grim Humanism." The term covers all those practices which reflect the belief that, for education to be good, the student has to suffer.[9] We are perhaps not as bad off as the British school master of the last century who said, "It doesn't really matter what the boys study actually, so long as they thoroughly detest it." But the fact remains that many foreign language teachers are still quite suspicious of anything which smacks of "fun and games." This was not always so in Western tradition. In the Socratic dialogs, joy and learning are interrelated if not synonomus. And, in his Republic Plato himself said, "Bodily exercise when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind." And he went on to say, "...do not use compulsion, but let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to find out the natural bent." Modern psychological studies have tended to support Plato in his advocacy of joy in learning versus the compulsion of extrinsic motivation. I have already mentioned the article in Psychology Today with the fascinating title "How Teachers Turn Play into Work" which illustrated that, by rewarding students extrinsically teachers could induce them to stop engaging in educational activity which they had formerly done spontaneously under the assumption that it was fun. Also, Harlow, the psychologist who has worked extensively with primates, found that a similar result could be achieved with monkeys. In one of his experiments he began with a series of puzzles that monkeys were able to solve. They engaged in the puzzle-solving activity apparently out of the pure joy of the activity itself. But then Harlow introduced rewards in the form of food for the once-spontaneous activity of puzzle solving. As the rewards were withdrawn, the monkeys gradually lost interest. When the rewards where removed completely, they refused to engage in further puzzle solving thus demonstrating that monkeys, like people can be made to dislike learning if only we work at it hard enough. In this regard, one of the more discouraging findings of the now famous Pennsylvania Study related to the fact tha

with both traditional and "modern" instructional methods, students started out the beginning courses with high expectations about learning a foreign language, but were progressively disillusioned about such learning as the months went by. But foreign language teachers are not alone in this. Fader, the author of Hooked on Books, once commented that he could easily solve the problem of overpopulation; all that was needed, he said, was to mandate sex education and to teach it in the same way we have been teaching English for the last 50 years. This tactic, he insisted, would insure that the entire generation of young people would completely lose interest in the activity! The point here is that we can demotivate as well as motivate. One of the outcomes of language study ought to be a positive attitude toward the knowledge and learning of foreign languages. As Turner has noted, there are enough negative attitudes about our field already. The last thing we need is a system for creating additional ones.

One block to optimum learning needs much more attention. I am referring to the fallacious use of reconstructed logic of concepts from other fields and the direct application of these concepts to the methods of language teaching. It may be true that the new generative grammarians and, earlier, the structural linguistics did much to add insights about the nature of language. A similar statement could be made about Skinner and his conditioning of rats and pigeons. However, the fallacy lies in thinking that an analytical system can be converted into a pedagogical school. A biologist who would take a descriptive taxonomy of the nature of human life and who would attempt to build a live human being from it would be considered a madman, Frankenstein notwithstanding. However, many people in our profession have meekly accepted the belief that language should be presented in the patterned forms which linguists have derived from their research. And many people have also accepted a rather simplistic theory of learning psychology based upon Skinner's experiments with lower animals over which he had complete control by being able to withhold food to the point where the animals were frantic. It should have long since been

evident that the foreign language educator, (who is concerned with optimum, humanistic development of human students) has very little, if anything which he can adapt directly from either the linguist or the experimental psychologist. It is only in recent years that any significant number of psycho-linguistic scholars have been willing to admit this. It is significant, however, that they are finally doing so. If it is true, as Pope said, that "the proper study of mankind is man," then I submit that it is equally true that the proper study of language teaching is the language classroom. Perhaps the last place we should look for help is in the linguistic anthropologists field notes or the Skinner rat box.

WAYS OF MOTIVATING AMERICAN STUDENTS

I am personally suspicious of neat how-to-do-it systems for accomplishing anything more complex than unclogging the kitchen sink. Thus, it is with a degree of uneasiness that I begin this discussion of how to motivate students. I would prefer to talk about "techniques which have worked for others and which might work for you if you first adapt them to your local situation." And the reason for this has to do with the concept of individual uniqueness. We have heard a great deal about individualization of instruction for students. But it is often forgotten that the teacher, too, is an individual. Thus, to impose one particular system for individualizing instruction upon a large group of varied adult teachers is to violate the basic principle of individualization. To a considerable degree, the same principle applies to motivation. That is, not all motivational practices will be equally useful to everyone. There are teachers whose personality or school environments will so differ from that of the originator of a given technique as to render its application to other classrooms highly questionable. So, instead of presenting the reader with a laundry list of supposedly proven motivational techniques, it would perhaps be more productive to look at certain broad principles for motivating language students which have been developed over the centuries, and then relate selected practical examples

to the various concepts. Because these principles reflect my own opinions and biases, I will refer to them as "assumptions." And my assumptions are as follows:

ASSUMPTION 1 - OPTIMUM FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING TAKES PLACE IN AN EMOTIONALLY-SUPPORTIVE, NON-THREATENING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

There is evidence that stutterers are people who were emotionally threatened during the period of first language acquistion. Thus, it is reasonable to expect second-language performance which is characterized by embarrased stammering, frightened mumbling, or mechanical recitation from students whose language instruction takes place in an emotionally repressive atmosphere. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to sarcasm, public criticism and ridicule. Many of them are desperately in need of supportive social interaction. There are many who believe that neither the standard teacher-dominated "whole class" approach nor the isolated learning of unipac-materials in a laboratory booth (or a combination of these) will adequately serve the motivational needs of young people. Although these learning modes have their place, a third mode involving small groupings within the class can also be used to good advantage. By using such groupings, the teacher can make advantageous use of both cooperation and competition. One of the more promising trends in foreign language instruction today involves the combination of both of these social realities within the classroom. Competition can be destructive and demotivating when each individual is forced to measure his achievement against that of the entire class. Sometimes high achievers are even threatened by this process, for example, when a student is labeled as the "brain" who ruined the curve by scoring so high on the last test. At the other extreme the slower learner is devastated by being always at the bottom. However, by splitting the class into halves (or into smaller subgroups) for some activities competition can be dealt with as a team effort. In fact, it might even be wise to establish as a general rule that when pupils are put into public competition with one another it should be done by groups or teams rather than individually.

Some examples of how this has been applied by successful teachers are given below.

GRAMMAR

Although certain "New Key" purists might frown at the practice, I observed one third year Spanish class in which students in teams of five competed against their classmates in demonstrating their ability to conjugate irregular Spanish verbs in the preterite. The teacher used a stop watch to declare the winner. Each error brought a penalty of one second. This is an example of the extrinsic use of games, the purpose of which is to get students to focus their attention upon particular points of grammar. However, the teacher also made good use of intrinsic motivation as evidenced by a subsequent observation of the same students interviewing an educator from South America. Speaking extemporaneously, the students asked him a wide variety of questions ranging from personal facts (occupation, place of residence, etc.) to opinions (what do you think of our foreign policy, of the Peace Corps, of American schools, etc.) From their responses and the questions they re-directed to the speaker (and to one another) it was evident that the students were following what the native speaker was saying. It was also clear that the students had learned to be at ease in using the language freely in front of their peers. In fact, they were so secure that they could even criticize each other good-naturedly in the presence of the visitor. Occasional remarks (in Spanish) such as, "That's a dumb question," or "You can't ask a question like that," did not appear to bother anyone. Such remarks came from fellow students, not from the teacher. The students made occasional mistakes in verb forms, number, and even gender, but they were fluent and clearly understandable. And the man from South America was obvious impressed and pleased by the exchange. There was certainly no evidence that the study of traditional grammar had in any way inhibited these students in their ability to communicate despite what critics of formal grammar instruction have said. I suspect that the inhibiting of student responses

has more to do with the emotional tone which the teacher sets for the class than with the way in which he/she teaches grammar.

WRITING

Using various kinds of topics and stimuli a German teacher had students in groups of 3-5 prepare short compositions to present to the fourth year class for discussion and conversation. For example, one assignment involved the layout of a mansion in which a murder had taken place. The victim was the wealthy Herr Leich (Mr. Corpse). A list of suspicious characters was supplied along with a number of vocabulary items and useful expressions. Each group was to come up with their own correctly-written version of "who done it," and to defend their decision. The murder took place in the study; the murder weapon was a Luger revolver. Was it the butler, the maid, the visiting ballet dancer, the count? Also involved in the exercise was a review of the passive voice, the use of conjunctions, and the use of relative pronouns. At the end of the unit, students were asked to evaluate the procedures with an instrument entitled, "Clues About Classroom Life." (See appendix) In summary, we note that students were creatively involved in the group activity of preparing their own version of a murder mystery. There was friendly rivalry between groups. And in the end the students had a further opportunity to feel that their views mattered. Not only had they been asked to create some of the instructional content for the fourth year course, but they had also had the opportunity to evaluate the process of instruction from their own viewpoint.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

One of the options selected by Waukesha Spanish students from among the list of more than 20 mini-courses was the "Native Speaker Seminar." This involved listening to short presentations by native speakers and asking them questions. Some of the questions were of a general nature. These were formulated in advance by the students. Other questions arose out of the presentation by and discussion with the native speaker.

This brought the students somewhat closer to a free response situation. Additional student practice was provided through assignments which required students to interview one another and the various Spanish teachers in the building. Additional listening practice was provided by means of taped material. Readings involving transcribed interviews of famous Spanish-speaking people were also used (Dali, Cantinflas, and Franco were among the famous people represented here.) Writing took the form of short written summations of what the native speakers had said. The basic purpose of the seminar was to get the students to use the language functionally for the reception and communication of ideas. In this regard, the following directions for student participation were included in the instructional materials:

> You will be expected to participate each day that guest speakers are invited to speak. You will do so by asking questions of the speaker or making comments on the subject of the day. DO NOT BE AFRAID TO MAKE MISTAKES. (Your teachers do from time to time). You are learning a foreign language. You need to practice. No one expects perfection. It's not just the natives that are good enough to speak the language. You are too.

The seemingly small successes which most students can achieve by means of this type of "Native Speaker Seminar" can have a disproportionate effect (on the positive side) by helping the student to build confidence in his ability to communicate with people from the target culture. It also helps to break down the stereotype of language learning as being dead subject matter contained in a book. Having a real live native speaker with whom to exchange ideas can be of immense value in this regard.

VOCABULARY

Games to help motivate students to acquire foreign language vocabulary are far from new. Bingo, Scrabble, and a foreign language version of the old country-school spelldown have been used by teachers for many years. In one version of the latter, students are asked to sketch (or cut out of magazines) pictures relating to the vocabulary of past chapters. The pictures are placed in a large cardboard box. When it is time for vocabulary review the class is formed into two teams. Members from each team take turns drawing pictures out of the box and asking appropriate questions (in

the foreign language, of course). The question can be predesigned to review a particular aspect of the foreign language such as interrogatives, imperatives or the use of complex syntactic patterns. For example:

"What is this?" (elementary level)

"Tell me what I have here, please." (Familiar or polite form)

"Would you be so kind as to tell me what I have in my hand?" (Done with a feeling of exaggerated politeness.)

"Can you tell me what I have here?"

The repetition of the selected expression by each student gives a limited degree of speaking and listening practice to everyone. However, the main purpose of the game is vocabulary review. Items which are missed are put back in the box after being correctly identified by the teacher. The game ends when all items have been correctly identified. The team with the highest score (i.e., with the most right answers) wins. Also, teachers have adapted some of the popular TV quiz games by designing large boards with removable windows into which various parts of speech can be inserted for the purposes of the game.

ASSUMPTION 2 - <u>RETENTION IS MORE LIKELY TO BE PERMANENT WHEN THE MATERIAL TO BE LEARNED IS IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTIVE, REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES OR ADEQUATE SIMULATIONS THEREOF</u>.

Considering the practical realities of the classroom, simulations will perhaps be of most use to most teachers. In the late 1900's the so-called "series system" developed by Francois Gouin became popular in foreign language instruction, especially in Germany. The class procedure followed these steps: (1) using the students' native language the teacher explained the general content of the material to be learned; (2) he enacted the events, describing at the same time in the target language what he was doing; (3) the single acts were divided into smaller ones and again enacted by teacher and pupils; (4) this was all done orally first, then in writing. As a methodologist in the 1940's expressed it, "The new element which he (Gouin) brought into language teaching was that the student is forced to be intensely active with his whole

being while dramatizing the single sentences of a given selection, an advantage hard to overestimate."[10] Historically, applications of the series system were reported to be extremely effective in teaching students to communicate orally. Modern applications of this approach to the development of listening comprehension skill have been made in recent years by James Asher[11] of San Jose State College in California and by Kalivoda, Morain and Elkins at the University of Georgia.[12] The modern versions of the series system (which have become more sophisticated with the addition of audio-visual devices) are referred to as The Audio-Motor Approach and Total Physical Response. Field trips to points of ethnic significance, dramatizations by students both live and on videotape or film, and travel or study abroad are other examples of activities which have had a favorable motivational impact upon the language learner. Weekend excursions to a "staged and simulated" second language environment, Saturday language folk fairs, and two-to-four-week language summer camps have also been highly successful in motivating students. However, not everyone can have access to such experiences. Therefore, it is part of the art of teaching to help students to project themselves into the role of a speaker of a second language by drawing upon their potential for creative drama. According to Morain, "Experiments with the audiomotor unit have shown that physical action in accompaniment to verbal expression enhances the acquisition of language. The student actor must bring words, gesture, posture, movement, and facial expression into harmony. He is charged with the necessity of using all aspects of language congruently. To do otherwise is to fail to communicate the emotional content which is inextricably bound to language."[13]

ASSUMPTION 3 - OPTIMUM LEARNING TAKES PLACE WHEN THE LEARNER HAS A DEGREE OF MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN DETERMINING EITHER WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED OR HOW IT IS TO BE LEARNED OR BOTH.

A dramatic example of favorable effects resulting from student involvement in determining, to some degree, the content of the curriculum is to be found in the

Waukesha, Wisconsin high schools. Flying in the face of state and national trends, their advanced-course enrollments in French and Spanish increased nearly 33 percent a year since 1972 when third-year mini-courses were first introduced. The students at the second-year level were allowed to indicate their preference for a series of potential courses any of which were teachable and intellectually sound in the opinion of the teachers. The courses which received the highest ratings from the students were, indeed, the ones selected. This process of involving the students apparently had a positive feedback effect on the first two years of instruction. After implementation of the advanced-level mini-courses, first and second year enrollments also began to rise significantly. The mini-courses are taught in a variety of modes including "whole class" instruction, small group work, and individualized instruction. (Further information on various ways to involve students in the curricular process are available from the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Dulles International Airport, P. O. Box 17430, Washington, D.C., single copy 50 cents. Ask for the Curriculum Report entitled: "A Foreign Language Option: The Mini-Course, Vol. 3, No. 1, October 1973. Author: Robert LaFayette.)

Many people feel that the mini-course approach is not practical during the first two years of instruction except when used occasionally to break the routine of elementary and intermediate instruction. This opinion is based on the belief that the first two years must be devoted to the acquisition of "basics" and that, therefore, the student will have insufficient command of the language to work directly with interdisciplinary material. In this regard, there are teachers who have devised ways of capitalizing upon the students' desire for originality while at the same time overcoming most of the dangers of premature use of partially learned material. One of the standard ways of doing this is to provide structurally-correct formula sentences to which the student can add personalized data. (E.g., "My name is _____." Or, "If I had a million dollars, I would _____.") At a somewhat higher level of

cognition, students can be asked to re-do the basic dialog or other drill material to fit their own perceptions of reality.[14] Although this approach has its difficulties, the idea of allowing students to create their own memory mediators appears to be sound. One investigator found that students could memorize word pairs more effectively if they were allowed to create their own mediators. They were instructed to learn the words by fitting them into a sentence of their own creation. A second group was told to memorize the word pairs in isolation, and third group was given for memorization the sentences created by the first group. Finally, all three groups were tested to see which method produce the best lean learning results. The group which was allowed to create its own memory mediators did significantly better than the two which had the material imposed upon them. In the words of the investigator, "The chief result is,... that children who provide their own mediators do best--indeed, one time through a set of thirty pairs, they recover up to 95 percent of the second words when presented with the first ones of the pairs, whereas the uninstructed children reach a maximum of less than 50 percent recovered."[15]

A Spanish teacher in one of our flourishing Wisconsin programs makes use of this principle by having students bring in (or make their own) pictures to represent utterances from current or past units of work. For example, the students at one time may be required to use imperatives, subjunctives, present participles or other appropriate forms. Students are encouraged to find or make humerous, ironic, sentimental or other emotional connections between language and the visualization which it represents. The items are brought into class and discussed. Examples of these student-made posters are also placed on display around the classroom and are later retired to a scrap book so that the teacher can use the material for future reference with other classes. It is a simple, inexpensive technique for getting the grammar out of the book into a context which has meaning to the students. Part of the meaning comes from the fact that the students themselves are involved in supplying the curricular materials

involving applied grammar. Another technique used by the same teacher involved the use of old greeting cards, valentines, and Christmas cards. The English captions or verses on the cards are covered over with thick white paper. The students then look at the pictorial material on the cards and supply original captions and verses in Spanish. This involves a somewhat more creative level of speech production, but within a very limited space. The verses are written first on a separate sheet of paper, are corrected by the teacher and then transferred to the card.

An even more elaborate example of this approach involves the use of film or videotaped productions in which the students prepare the scripts, do the scenery and staging, and actually produce a foreign language skit. At a simpler level there is the example of the German class in Minnesota which went on a field trip to the nearby Octoberfest. Students took inexpensive cameras with them and they shot two-by-two slides of the various events. A German-language narration was subsequently made of a selected series of slides as part of the class project. Projects of this type have been referred to as "culminating activities." That is, they are done only occasionally to give the students an opportunity to make an integrated application of the language skills they have acquired. However, the motivational value of a well-executed project of this kind can be enormous.

ASSUMPTION 4 - INSTRUCTION WHICH EMPHASIZES LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A CREATIVE, HOLISTIC PROCESS WILL ACHIEVE BETTER LONG-TERM RESULTS THAN WILL INSTRUCTION BUILT UPON REPETITIVE DRILL WORK AND ATOMISTIC LEARNING INCREMENTS.

It has been suggested that the ability to perform well on isolated aspects of the foreign language is not the same as being able to use the language in any genuine way. Savignon has stated that teachers have been excessively concerned with the learning and testing of student performance on dialongs, choral drills and patterned responses. The result has been that no time was left over "for that which only the

human teacher can provide, communication." And she went on to suggest that "...the human teacher knows, if you ask him, that communication is not the rapid-fire exchange of linguistically accurate complete sentences. It is the sometimes slow, sometimes painful, sometimes non-verbal exchange of thoughts between human beings."[16] (Savignon) It is the view of this paper that the creative expression of one genuine whole idea or emotion (in reasonably correct language) is to be valued over scores of mindlessly perfect drill responses. For the latter are only a means to the former. We have tended to value the instrument (the drill work) over the outcome (real communicative performance). It is my feeling that we must follow the lead of language teachers in other developed countries and aim at quality student performance on a much more limited number of linguistic elements. Our curricula (and textbooks) contain so much material that teachers become engaged in a frantic effort to "cover the ground." Several of the basic conditions for optimum motivation are destroyed in the process. As the year goes by teachers put on more and more pressure. And students become increasingly discouraged as it becomes apparent to them that the process leads nowhere except to increasingly difficult and seemingly unrelated masses of material to be drilled and memorized. Such programs become the fulfillment of Samuel Taylor Colleridge's lines:

> Work without hope draws nectar in the seive
> And hope without an object cannot live.

We must have the work, as every experienced foreign language teacher knows. But the work must lead to an object (satisfaction) which will, in turn, build hope in the recurrance of further satisfaction through the vehicle of language learning. All of this carries with it a certain view regarding the nature of language and language learning. As Diller has so aptly expressed it, "Language...is not so much an arbitrary set of conventions to be used for communication as it is a means of thinking, of representing the world to oneself. Language acquisition is not a conditioning process

in which the learner actively goes about trying to organize his perceptions of the world in terms of linguistic concepts."[17]

ASSUMPTION 5 - OPTIMUM FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IS MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THAT INDIVIDUAL WHOSE FUTURE SELF-IMAGE INCLUDES A VISION OF HIMSELF/HERSELF USING THE LANGUAGE SUCCESSFULLY; THE TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE STUDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT POTENTIAL GREATLY INFLUENCES SUBSEQUENT ACHIEVEMENT.

Goethe once said that, "If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be." In 1968 Rosenthal conducted a study which tended to support Goethe's statement.[18] Rosenthal's method was to randomly assign fictitious test scores to a selected number of students from a population of young people of similar ability and socio-economic background. The teachers of the selected children were then lead to believe that the test scores were valid predictors of academic potential. The result was higher achievement on the part of the youngsters who had been identified as "promising." Apparently, the teachers' belief in the abilities of the selected children was ~~somehow~~ communicated to them in such a way as to improve their actual performance. In this regard, it is my general impression that teachers who are highly successful (i.e., teachers who have high achievement and low attrition) are those who provide virtually all students with short-term, satisfying experiences of success in using the foreign language. They tend to radiate an attitude which says, in effect, "See, I knew you could do it."

Some applications of this principle which I have seen in practice are as follows: (1) In conversational situations, the teacher avoids public correction of student errors, allowing the conversation to flow freely, errors and all. However, he/she takes notes of the major patterns of mistakes and discusses them subsequently without identifying (and hence humiliating) any given student in front of the class.

Subsequent practice is directed toward the main error categories. An effort is made to teach students how to monitor and correct their own errors and to help fellow students produce correct forms as part of the effort to communicate feelings and ideas to one another. (2) Where written work is concerned, the teacher avoids massive use of red ink and negative, judgmental remarks on the student's paper. Instead, comments are directed toward that which is correct. Remarks like, "Good, you used the preterite correctly in this paragraph, " and "Fine progress on the use of the dative," should predominate. Again, errors are treated as a symptom of shortcomings in the instructional program rather than as a manifestation of student incompetence or laziness. With written work the attitude can also be, "How can we help students to identify and correct these particular mistakes which many have been making?"

In addition to the five assumptions discussed above, I would add a sixth and seventh as follows:

ASSUMPTION 6 - OPTIMUM LANGUAGE LEARNING DEMANDS THE INCLUSION OF ENJOYABLE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS.

Assumption 7 - OPTIMUM LANGUAGE LEARNING IS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR WHEN THE EVALUATION SYSTEM IS POSITIVE AND REWARDING RATHER THAN NEGATIVE AND PUNATIVE.

Assumption six has been treated in a different context above. The same is true to a degree with assumption seven. However, with respect to testing one must, perhaps, make certain concessions to competitive, judgmental approaches which are part of institutional policy, (e.g., mid-term and final exams). But this does not prevent the teacher from using the intermediate tests and quizzes as supportive learning tools rather than as a means of selecting out "the wheat from the chaff" or as threats "to do better next time, or else." Most texts can be given as diagnostic instruments to help the student. If optimum motivation is the goal, they should be so used.

SUMMARY.

There are a number of problems with the practice of listing specific instructional techniques which others have used. The first problem is that it is impossible to do justice to any given technique when it is described in writing. A second problem has to do with teacher self image; that is, many teachers are unable to project themselves into the kinds of roles which some of the techniques would require. A third problem is that not all schools and communities are set up for such activities as field trips, audiovisual productions or even small group sessions within the classroom. (I have found schools, for example, in which the student chairs are bolted to the floor thus allowing no flexibility in social groupings). And a fourth problem is the tendency within the profession to equate good education with a certain degree of plodding tedium and to view enjoyment in learning as "soft pedagogy" and the lowering of instructional standards. In view of all this it would perhaps be appropriate to note that the techniques described above are from programs where student achievement in the traditional sense is not sacrificed. In each case, the motivational technique was designed not primarily to amuse students, but to help them master some element of language better than they otherwise would have. In my own opinion, we still need the textbook, at least for the first two years, although we should be very selective about the items from the text which we choose. However, for any of the principles or suggested techniques listed above to function, teachers will have to have a particular mind-set. What is needed is not a frantic compulsion to force a given number of verbs, concepts or behavioral outputs upon unwilling adolescent minds and to justify that behavior with the prenicious myth that students need the language for some external purpose such as college preparation, career advantage, tourism, international understanding or national defense. Instead what is needed is the firm belief by the teacher that language learning is a worthwhile activity for anyone to engage in; that it develops potential within the human being that would otherwise remain dormant. More importantly, however, the teacher must demonstrate the truth of that belief by making the activity emotionally real to the students at their level of feeling and understanding. But it must go further than that. Motivation implies that the instructor should reach

the student where he/she is. However, the term also implies "motivation toward some goal." And that goal must involve both the integrity of the discipline and the further development of the individual. It is doing the student no favor to inspire him toward incompetence, which could well be the outcome if we were to submerge significant language content beneath a series of unfocussed "fun" activities. On the other hand, our purpose must not be the coverage of large doses of linguistic and cultural material in which students can perceive no relevance to contemporary realities or to future probabilities. Instead, I believe that we need to follow Genelle Morain's advice regarding the need to convert the language classroom into a place where the foreign language is used in a dramatic, emotionally-laden way. Beginning with a quotation from Robert Benedetti, she expressed it as follows: "'Theatre is the most human of all the arts and we...can expand our humanity through our art in ways denied us by everyday life.' We want our students to use language for real communication. We want them to express ideas and feelings. Drama permits emotional and linguistic involvement in the past, the present, and the future. It gives the classroom elastic horizons. Use it. You can expect dramatic results."[19]

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Date
Class hour

Clues About Classroom Life

So that members of a class and their teacher may get ideas about how to make life more interesting and important for everybody in the classroom, each person needs to contribute his or her ideas of what needs to be improved. What things happen that should not happen? What ought to happen, but does not. Try to imagin you are a detective looking for clues to a "good day" and a "bad day" in your class. Jot down what you might look for or might see to answer these questions. <u>There are no right or wrong answers</u>.

What are some clues to a good day in our class? What things happen that are signs of a good day?

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

4. _____.

What are some clues to a bad day in our class? What things happen that are clues that class is not going the way it should or that you would like it to?

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

4. _____.

What are some things that should happen a lot more that they do to make it a better class for learning and having fun?

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

4. _____.

5. _____.

6. _____.

Some of the best things about this class are .....

Some of the worst things about this class are .....
(use back of page if you want to)